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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7205
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 1657
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY 3575
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1203
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 2083
RUEHBAD/AMCONSUL PERTH 0473
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 003273

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DEPT FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, EAP/MLS, INR/EAP, EAP/PD, DS, EAP/ANP
NSC FOR E.PHU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/29/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KPAO](#) [PTER](#) [ID](#) [AS](#)

SUBJECT: CENTRAL JAVA -- OUTREACH IN KEY REGION

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Classified By: Pol/C Joseph Legend Novak, reasons 1.4 (b-d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Pol/C visited Semarang, the capital of Central Java, November 27-28. Pol/C--in a public outreach event--underscored the close links shared by the U.S. and Indonesia to a large, friendly group of university students. Pol/C met Central Java's Governor, who discussed the province's upcoming gubernatorial election. Pol/C also visited an Australian-run joint law enforcement training center. The center--established in the wake of the 2002 Bali bombings--has played a key role in upgrading Indonesia's counter-terror capabilities. END SUMMARY.

OUTREACH TO STUDENTS

¶2. (U) Pol/C spoke November 28 at Diponegoro University in Semarang. The university, which is public and considered quite prestigious, has about 40,000 students. Pol/C spoke to approximately 225 undergraduate students plus faculty and administration officials. In his remarks, Pol/C emphasized the vitality of U.S.-Indonesian relations. Pol/C noted how important reform was, commenting that--although Indonesia was already a successful democracy--more progress needed to take place in the areas of accountability and good governance. Accountability was vital; individuals at whatever level of society needed to be brought to justice if they were corrupt or committed human rights violations.

¶3. (U) Pol/C noted that Indonesia was concluding its one-month tenure as President of the UN Security Council, an important international position. Indonesia needed to do the right thing regarding Iran's nuclear program. The GOI also needed to support stability in Iraq. Indonesia's role as a peace-keeper was also vital; its forces in Lebanon were playing an important function and the international community appreciated its plans to send a police unit to Darfur.

¶4. (U) Pol/C also highlighted the situation in Burma, condemning the brutal crackdown and the ongoing detention of democratic activists. Pol/C placed a spotlight on U.S. steps--including targeted sanctions--against the regime and our support for UN Special Envoy Gambari's efforts. Pol/C stressed that Indonesia--as East Asia's largest democracy and

a force in ASEAN--needed to play an enhanced role regarding Burma. Pol/C urged that students get involved with civil society groups, and press the national government and legislature to take steps to isolate the regime.

15. (U) The students had many questions about U.S. Middle East policy. Some of them were critical of the U.S. and the decision to invade Iraq. One student wondered whether the U.S. planned to deal in a military way with Iran. Pol/C stressed the USG's commitment to diplomacy regarding Iran, and noted intensive U.S. efforts to arrange the recent Middle East Peace Conference in Annapolis involving the Israelis and Palestinians, an event which was observed by the Indonesian Foreign Minister. Another student asked whether the U.S. was anti-Muslim. Pol/C noted that that was not at all true; millions of Americans were Muslim and the U.S. respected all religions.

IN CENTRAL JAVA

16. (SBU) Pol/C and Pol FSN visited Semarang, the capital of Central Java, November 27-28. Central Java, with about 35 million people, is the third most populous province in Indonesia. Semarang, with over 1.6 million people, is the fifth-largest city. Semarang--located about 600 kilometers southeast of Jakarta--is an important administrative center, and port, rail and road nexus for Java Island. The city is also known for having a large Chinese Indonesian population. While the city has pockets of prosperity, it has a bit of a "rustbelt" feel, and seems to lack the general dynamism of Jakarta and Bandung (the capital of West Java).

17. (C) Pol/C's interlocutors--from the governor's office, the mayor's office, the business and academic communities, etc.--stressed how calm the political situation was in the province. Although Central Java had been known several years ago for hosting serious pockets of Islamic militancy,

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including near the city of Solo, the general perceptive is that hard-liners are losing support. That said, a well-known Islamic school run by Abu Bakar Ba'asyir the co-founder of the Jemmah Islamiyah terrorist group, remains in operation near Solo.

18. (C) In a meeting with Pol/C, Chinese Indonesian businesspeople (all of them Christian) related that they faced little to no prejudice in their day-to-day lives from the majority Javanese Muslim population. Trisnati (one name only), a local Chinese Indonesian businesswoman and a member of the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, commented that "everyone is considered Indonesian here and there is a great deal of tolerance." She added that Semarang has no recent history of ethnic disturbances.

POWER TO THE PEOPLE

19. (C) Central Javans seem largely focused on elections. In June 2008, the province will hold its first direct vote ever for governor (officials previously have been selected by local bodies or by the center). In a November 27 meeting with Pol/C, Governor Ali Mufiz said his administration was actively making preparations for the vote. Mufiz, a former academic with a degree from the University of Southern California (he was very interested in who was favored to win the upcoming game with UCLA), would not confirm whether or not he planned to run. Most commentators believe that he would be able to run a fairly strong campaign if he wanted to. (Note: The previous governor, Mardiyanto--one name only--was recently selected by President Yudhoyono to be Home Affairs Minister. Mufiz moved up from being vice-governor.)

110. (C) Other contenders for the governor's job include the current Mayor of Semarang, Sukawi Sutarip. Golkar, the strongest political party in Indonesia, intends to nominate Bambang Sadono. PDIP, the Indonesian Democratic Party

Struggle--a popular party in Central Java--has not yet met to discuss who might be its candidate. Observers do not expect any problems in running the election.

A KEY ANTI-TERROR FACILITY

¶11. (C) Pol/C also visited an important counter-terrorism and law enforcement training center. The Jakarta Center for Law Enforcement Cooperation (JCLEC)--based in Semarang on the grounds of a National Police Academy facility--was founded by the governments of Indonesia and Australia in response to the Bali bombings of 2002. (Note: The technical name of the Center is a misnomer, as it is not linked with Jakarta.) The Center was established via Australian and European Union funding, and is managed by the Australian government.

¶12. (C) The state-of-the-art Center hosts a variety of classes aimed at improving the skills and capabilities of law enforcement officials throughout Indonesia and the region. Observers assert that the Center has provided important upgrades to Indonesia's counter-terrorist capabilities since its opening in 2004. The Director of the Center, Lester Cross, told Pol/C that he expects the new Australian government under Kevin Rudd to continue to support the Center's operations fully. Cross said he appreciated the USG's close collaboration with the Center.

HUME